

# High-Flyer

*Carolyn Pearson talks to H&E North about Maiden Voyage, her internet networking site aimed at women travelling on business.*



Carolyn Pearson

## What inspired the creation of Maiden Voyage?

The idea came to me when I travelled to LA for business purposes - I was excited about visiting the vibrant city and had expectations of all the things I would do and see. My hopes soon diminished when I pulled up in a taxi and found the hotel to be located in a business district which was limited and boring.

I realised that my visit would have been enriched if I had somebody familiar with the area to share the experience with and offer female-friendly tips.

What seemed to be missing was an internet networking site through which business women could meet with like-minded women to make the most of their leisure time when travelling.

## What services does the network offer?

In addition to connecting women who are travelling, Maiden Voyage provides useful travel and safety information and recommends hotels, products and services which appeal to women.

The recommended hotels have been thoroughly inspected by a female representative in terms of security and cleanliness; double locking, for example, is essential. And what we do that's different is look at it from a female perspective with things like the quality of toiletries and home comforts. For hotels wanting to get on board, they can take part in our bespoke female-focused hospitality training.

The company also has a team of international ambassadors working in numerous countries. Women on business can contact them for inside information and female-friendly places to go.

And those involved in the network are entitled to certain events and offers such as glasses of bubbly which are always a good thing!

## Are there any success stories from Maiden Voyage which are particularly memorable?

I am forever hearing stories of new friendships recounted to me - it's more than a network, it's an experience!

I recall hearing from two ladies who had scheduled a connection in Brazil to explore during their leisure time. When they finally met up, they realised they only lived two minutes away from each other back home.

## What are your future plans for Maiden Voyage?

The intention is to massively grow the network and have it operate on a much bigger scale. I am actually now looking for a local experienced hospitality sales manager to help me look after the sales side of the business.

I'm aiming for our number of international ambassadors to reach 100 and for us to be involved in at least 300 female-friendly hotels. At present, we are involved in hotels throughout the North like Raithwaite Hall and the Crowne Plaza in Leeds. Our North representatives also include Marion Lawrence in Leeds, Jacqueline Hughes-Lundy in Manchester and Simone Roche in Liverpool.

Additionally, I want to expand in other ways, such as getting more luxury brands involved and having secure car companies at hand.

## Why are women travelling on business a target market?

It's due to the fact that the lives of women are all encompassing - they take on so many roles at once and really require that to be catered for.

As a result of being image conscious, female travellers tend to order room service rather than eating out alone. And it must also be considered that so many women travelling are mothers and wives so things like Wi-Fi should ideally be in place so they can keep things running smoothly at home.

Women need services to be sensitive to their interests.

## Have you always been passionate about travel?

As long as I can remember, travelling has been a permanent fixture in my life - I love it! When I was younger I ventured around the world on my own. And another pursuit of mine is travel writing.

That's the great thing about Maiden Voyage; it combines my passions of technology, travel and supporting other women.

## How can women succeed as entrepreneurs?

My advice is to be able to sell. It sounds simple but it realistically is much more of a struggle to overcome.

One day you are forming the idea in your head and the next you are trying to sell the product for a fair price - you must learn to believe in its value. Without achieving that, you won't have a business.

Visit [Maiden-voyage.com](http://Maiden-voyage.com)

